LEX IGNEA:
OR
The School of Righteousness.

A
SERMON
Preach'd before the KING,
Octob. 10. 1666.
At the SOLEMN FAST appointed
For the late
FIRE in *LONDON.*

By WILLIAM SANCROFT, D.D.
Dean of St. *Pauls.*

Published by His Majesties special Command.

London, Printed for *Timothy Garthwait*.. 1666.

A LIST *of the Annual Amount of this Charity, as compleat as could be procured, commencing with* 1721. *By which will be perceived, how much in general the Charity has encreased from the Approbation and Bounty of the Public, and which, it is hoped, it will continue to do so, as to equal the Wants of those whom it was calculated to provide for.*

	l.	*s.*	*d.*
1721---	330	16	
1722---	382	16	
1723---	382	6	
1724---	566	10	
1725---	630	5	
1726---	575	4	
1727---	651		
1728---	595	17	9
1729---	523	6	11
1730---	722	6	4
1731---	840	1	
1732---	951	1	3
1733---	909	6	
1734---	1000	3	
1735---	850	5	3
1736---	837	7	
1737---	856	9	7
1738---	935	2	7
1739---	912	11	3
1740---	784	1	6
1741---	834	2	
1742---	866	6	2
1743---	819		
1744---	848	16	9
1745---	1044		
1746---	922	10	6
1747---	1062	2	
1748---	916	6	6
1749---	985	12	6
1750---	1134	14	
1751---	1167	19	
1752---	1101	18	6
1753---	1063	2	6
1754---	976	8	2
1755---	1087	15	6

Lately Publiſhed, (Price 6d.)

I. MR. ARNOLD KING'S Sermon preached before the *Sons* of the *Clergy*, 1751.

II. Mr. TOWNLEY'S Sermon before the *Sons* of the *Clergy*, 1752. Price 6d.

III. Mr. ASHTON'S Sermon before the *Sons* of the *Clergy*, 1753. Price 6d.

IV. Several DISCOURSES preached at the *Temple Church*, by THOMAS SHERLOCK, D. D. late *Maſter* of the *Temple*, now Lord *Biſhop* of *London*. A new Edition in 2 Volumes Octavo. Price 10s. bound

N. B. The Second Volume may be had alone, Price 5s.

V. Biſhop SHERLOCK'S Six Diſcourſes on the USE and INTENT of PROPHECY. To which are added, *Four Diſſertations*, and an *Appendix*, being a farther Enquiry into the Moſaic Account of the Fall. The Sixth Edition. Price 5s. bound.

N. B. The *Appendix* may be had alone to compleat former Editions. Price 1s.

VI. The TRIAL of the WITNESSES of the RESURRECTION of JESUS. The Thirteenth Edition. Price 1s. 6d.

VII. A *Vindication* of the *Corporation* and *Teſt Acts*, in Anſwer to the *Biſhop of Bangor*'s Reaſons for the Repeal of them. To which is added, A ſecond Part, concerning the *Religion of Oaths*. The ſecond Edition corrected. Price 1s. 6d.

VIII. DISCOURSES on the CHRISTIAN RELIGION, in ſeven Diſſertations, by JOHN JORTIN, M. A. Price 4s. bound. The Third Edition.

IX. SERMONS on various Subjects, with a prefatory Diſcourſe on Miſtakes concerning Religion, Enthuſiaſm, Experiences, &c. by THOMAS HARTLEY, M. A. Rector of *Winwick*, *Northamptonſhire*. The Second Edition corrected. Price 5s. bound.

X. The DISPERSION of the MEN at BABEL conſidered, and the principal Cauſe of it inquired into, by JOSEPH CHARLES, Rector of *Wighton*, in *Norfolk*. Price 4s. 6d. bound.

ISAIAH xxvi. 9.

—When thy Judgements are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the world will learn Righteouſneſs.

THis Chapter with the two next before, and that which follows, are all four parts of the ſame prophetick Sermon, (as appears by thoſe words ſo often repeated in them, *In that Day*, fixing, and determining All to the ſame *Epoch*, and period of Time;) belong All to the ſame Subject Matter, *ſc.* the Deſtruction of *Judah*, and *Jeruſalem*, whether by the *Babylonians*, or the *Romans*, or both. So that *the Earth* (or as we may rather tranſlate, *the Land*,

v. 1. & 3. or the Countrey) *Waſted, and utterly ſpoiled, and turn'd upſide down* Cap. xxiv. is doubtleſs the Land of *Jewry*: And *the World, that languiſheth, and fadeth away*, v. 4. of that Cap. not much wider; that, and the neighbouring Regions, with whom the *Jews* had commerce, and intercourſe of Peace, and War, *Moab*, and *Egypt*, and *Babylon*, in a word, the *Jewiſh World*; (for ſo both the *Hebrew*, and *Greek* words, uſually tranſlated *the Earth, and the World*, are often in Scripture language contracted, and limited by the Matter in hand:) And conſequently *the City of Confuſion*, which *is broken down*, a City turn'd *Chaos* again, as the *Hebrew* imports, Cap. xxiv. 10. *the City turn'd into a Heap*, or a Ruine, nay *in tumulum*, as the *Vulgar Latine*, or εἰς χῶμα, as the *Lxx.* turn it, into one great Sepulchre to it ſelf, buried in its own Rubbiſh, Cap. xxv. 2; *the lofty City laid low even to the ground, and abaſed in the very Duſt*, Cap. xxvi. 5; *the City deſolate, and forſaken, and left Wilderneſs*, and deſert all over, Cap. xxvii. 10, are but ſo many variations of the phraſe, and ſignifie all the ſame thing, the *burning* of *Jeruſalem*, by *Nebuchadnezzar*, or *Titus*, or (as ſome will have it) by both.

חֹבֵל & אֶרֶץ & עוֹלָם & κόσμος.

קִרְיַת תֹּהוּ

This ſad Devaſtation the Prophet firſt beholds *in ſpeculo prophetico*, ſees it from far in his prophetick *Teleſcope*, as clearly, and diſtinctly, as if

if it were before his eyes; and describes it here, and there the whole Sermon throughout, but chiefly Cap. xxiv. in so lofty Language, that many have mistaken it for the *End* of the World, and the Consummation of all things. But then, to sweeten so sad a Theme, he assures them, it shall not be a Παναλεθρία, God will not make a final End now: No, a Remnant shall be left, *as the shaking of an Olive-tree, and as the gleaning Grapes, when the Vintage is done*, Cap. xxiv. 13. Nor shall they be onely preserv'd, but restor'd too; *The Lord God will* in time *wipe away* (*Lacrymam*) *every Tear from off all Faces*, and at last *swallow up* this *Death* too *in Victory*, Cap xxv. 8. He'll turn their Captivities, and *rebuild* their City, and their *Temple* too; and All this shall be as it were *Life from the Dead*, as the Apostle calls it, so miraculous a Reestablishment, at a Juncture so improbable, when they are destroyed out of all Ken of Recovery, that it shall be a kind of a Resurrection; and so like the great One, that 'tis described in the very proper phrases of that, both by the other Prophets, and by Ours too a little below the Text, *Thy Dead shall live again*; *My dead Bodies shall arise: Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the Dust*, &c. And then, (which is of neerest Concern to us, and to our present Business) the Prophet directs the Remnant

Rom. xi. 15.

Ezek. xxxvii. Dan. xii. v. 19.

Remnant, that ſhould eſcape, how to behave themſelves under ſo great a Deſolation; and he contrives his Directions into a threefold *Song* (that they may be the better remarkt, and remembred) tun'd, and fitted to the three great Moments of the Event.

The *firſt*, to the time of the Ruine it ſelf, *Cap. xxiv.* where having ſet before their eyes the ſad proſpect of the holy City, and *Houſe of God* in Flames; *When thus it ſhall be in the midſt of the Land*, ſaith he, there ſhall be a Remnant, *and they ſhall lift up their voyce, and ſing for the Majeſty of the Lord*, ſaying, *Glorifie ye the Lord in the Fires*, ver. 15. And this is שִׁיר תְּהִלָּה a Song of Praiſe.

The *ſecond* is שִׁיר מַעֲלוֹת a Song of Degrees, or Aſcenſions, fitted to the time of their Return, when All ſhould be reſtor'd, and rebuilt again; and that we have *Cap. xxvii.* 2. *In that Day ſing ye unto her; A Vineyard of red Wine: I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment; leſt any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.*

The *third* (of which my Text is a principal ſtrein) belongs to the whole middle Interval between the Ruine, and the Reſtauration in this *xxvi. Cap. In that day ſhall this Song be ſung in the Land of Judah, We have a ſtrong City; Salvation will God appoint for Walls, and Bulwarks,*

Bulwarks, &c. As if he had ſaid; Though our City be ruin'd, yet God is ſtill our dwelling place; our Fortreſſes diſmantled, and thrown down, but Salvation will He appoint us for Walls, and Bulwarks; Our *Temples* in the Duſt, but God will be to us himſelf, *as a little Sanctuary*. And this is מַסְכִּיל שִׁיר a Song to give Inſtruction, teaching them, and in them us, how to demean our ſelves, while the Calamity lies upon us: *ſc.* to make God our Refuge, *ver.* 4. to wait for him in the Way of his Judgments, *ver.* 8. and in this 9 *ver.* earneſtly *to deſire him from the very ſoul in the Night* (in the Darkeſt, and Blackeſt of the Affliction;) *to ſeek him early*, when it begins to dawn towards a better condition: and in the mean time, as 'tis in the Text, to improve all this ſevere Diſcipline, as he intends it, for the advancing us in the knowledge of Him, and of our ſelves, and of our whole Duty; *For When thy Judgments are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteouſneſs.* Ezek. xi. 16.

A Text you ſee, that ſuppoſeth Judgments in the Earth, or upon a Land (as its Occaſion) and ſo ſutable to our ſad Condition: a Text too, that propoſeth our Learning, as its End, and Deſign, and ſo ſutable (one would think) to our Inclination too. The Character, and *Genius* of the Age, we live in, is *Learned*: the

the pretence at this day so high, and so universal, that He is No-body now, who hath not a new *Systeme* of the World, a new *Hypothesis* in Nature, a new *Model* of Government, a new *Scheme* of God's Decrees, and the greatest Depths in Theology. We are many of us acute Philosophers (that must not be disputed us;) most of us grand Politicks, and Statesmen too; All of us (without Exception) deep Divines: — will needs be wiser, than our Neighbours, but however wiser than our Teachers, and Governors, if not wiser than God himself. A kind of *Moral Rickets*, that swells, and puffs up the Head, while the whole inner Man of the Heart wasts, and dwindles. For like
2Tim.iii.6,7. the *silly Women*, Disciples to the old *Gnosticks*, while we are thus *ever learning* (pretending to great Heights, and Proficiencies) we *come never to the knowledge of the Truth* (*the Truth, which is according unto Godliness*;) In fine, amongst so many Learners they are, but few, that learn Righteousness: — And therefore God himself here opens us a School; erects a severe Discipline in the Text; brings forth his *Ferulas*, and his Rods, when nothing else will serve the Turn. For he hath indeed *four* Schools, or rather four distinct Forms, and Classes in the same great School of Righteousness; the last only (that of his Judgments) express in the Text,

Text, but the Reſt too ſuppos'd at leaſt, or covertly implied.

For whether we look upon the later Clauſe of the propoſition. *The Inhabitants of the World will learn*; —We find our ſelves there under a double Formalitie; As Learners, and as Inhabiters. As Learners firſt, and ſo indu'd with Faculties of Reaſon; Powers of a Soul capable of Learning, what is to be learned; ſtampt, and poſſeſt with firſt Principles, and common Notions which deeply ſearch'd, and duly improv'd, and cultivated, might teach us Much of Righteouſneſs. And this is *Schola Cordis in Domo interiori*, the School of the Heart, God's firſt School in the little World within us. Secondly, as Inhabitants of the great World, which is God's School too, as well as his Temple, full of Doctrines and Inſtrnctions; *Schola Orbis*, in which, He takes us forth continual Leſſons of Righteouſneſs, — *Seque ipſum inculcat, & offert, Ut bene cognoſci poſsit*; and that both from the Natural World, and from the Political; whether *Schola Regni*, or *Schola Eccleſiæ*. Or if we return to the former Branch of the Text, *When thy Judgments are in the Earth*. This *when they* are, ſuppoſeth another time, when they *Are Not* in the Earth, and *that time is the time of love*, (as the Prophet ſpeaks) the Seaſon of Mercy; So that, Thirdly, here's *Schola Miſeri-*

1.

2.

Ezek. xvi. 8.

3.

cordiarum, the School of God's tender Mercies
Hoſ. xi. 4. inviting us, gently leading, and *drawing us with the Cords of a Man, with the Bands of Love*:
4. And laſtly, when nothing elſe will ſerve, here's *Schola Judiciorum*, the School of God's ſevere Judgments driving us to Repentance, and compelling us to come in and learn Righteouſneſs. A proviſion (you ſee) every way ſufficient, and abundant for our Learning, were not we wanting to our ſelves.

But alas! we may run by the Text, and eaſily read in it theſe *three* things, as ſo many very Natural Deductions, and Emanations from it.
1. Firſt, our own Ignorance and Stupiditie; *Born*
Job xi. 12. *like a wilde Aſſe's Colt*, as *Zophar* ſpeaks; and then to our Natural we add affected Ignorance too: So that we are much to ſeek, and to learn.
2. Righteouſneſs it muſt be taught us. Secondly, God's infinite, and inexpreſſible Grace and Mercy to us; that when we had blurr'd the Original, defac'd the firſt Traces of Righteouſneſs upon our Souls, he was pleas'd to provide Expedients to teach it us again the ſecond time,
Col. iii. 10. that we might be *renewed unto Knowledge after*
Epheſ. iv. 24. *the Image of him, that created us in Righteouſneſs*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks. And Thirdly,
3. Our indocible and unteachable Humor, our foul and ſhameful Non-proficiency under ſo plentiful a Grace. For though the Text indeed

ſpeaks

speaks of our learning Righteousness, when God's Judgments are upon us; yet (if the Appearances of the World abroad suggested nothing to the contrary) 'tis introduc'd here in the Text too, as the Effect of the last Form in God's School, in exclusion of all the former as ineffectual; his utmost Method not to be used but at a pinch, when all the rest are baffled, and prove improsperous upon us: And then 'tis expreſt in the Original, and learned *Versions* with so many Limitations and Abatements (as we shall see by, and by) that we may well give it up, as the sum and upshot of All, That our All-merciful God omits no Means or Methods of our Improvement; but we (supinely negligent, and prodigiously stubborn as we are) render them all ineffectual.

That we may do so no longer, but rather make good the profession, with which we have dar'd to appear this Day before God, of humbling our selves under his Almighty Hand; Let us, before we pass on any further, lift up our Hands and our Hearts to him in the Heavens, beseeching him by the power of his mighty Grace so to sanctifie to us All, both the Sense of his present Judgment, and all our Meditations and Discourses thereupon, that by All we may be promoted in learning Righteousness.

THE *Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteouſneſs or Juſtice*: What's that? Is there ſuch a Thing in the World? Or is it a Name onely, and a glorious pretence? Is it not onely another Word for *Intereſt*, or Utilitie, and ſo nothing juſt, but what is profitable; *Carneades* his infamous Aſſertion retriv'd and own'd with open face by Chriſtians? Is it not the taking of a party, or the eſpouſing of a Faction, and appearing for it with heat and animoſity; and a ſavage condemning and deſtroying All that are not of it? Is it not the Profeſſion to believe ſuch a *Syſtem* of Opinions, what Life ſoever is conſequent thereupon? an airy inviſible Righteouſneſs, that never embodies or appears in our Actions, but hovers in the Clouds, in ſpeculations and fancies, where no Man can finde it?

V. Lactant. lib. v.

The Truth is, there is no piece of Unrighteouſneſs more common in the World, than thus to weigh Juſtice its ſelf in an unjuſt balance; while every one contrives his *Hypotheſis* ſo as to ſalve the *Phænomena*, ſo declares his Notion, as may beſt ſuit and comport with his own unrighteous practices. But the Righteouſneſs, we are to learn in God's School, muſt not be a ſelf-choſen Righteouſneſs: We muſt not pay God, our Soveraign, the Tribute of our Obedience

in

in coyn of our own ſtamping; It muſt be ſuch as will abide the Touchſtone of his Word, and the Balance of his Sanctuary. To make ſhort, Righteouſneſs or Juſtice, though elſwhere a ſingle Vertue, yet here 'tis virtually All: — Συλλήβδην πᾶσ' ἀρετή 'στι, ſaid the Poet; and the Philoſopher after him, Οὐ μέρος ἀρετῆς, ἀλλ' ὅλη ἀρετή ἐστι, not a part, but all Vertue: And ſo often both in Scripture, and Fathers, comprehenſively all Religion, the whole Duty of Man. ἡ πᾶσι ἐπιζήλων ἐκπλήρωσις, ſaith S. *Chryſoſtome*: *Omnes Virtutum ſpecies uno Juſtitiæ nomine*, ſaith S. *Jerome*. Not a particular Star, nor a ſingle Conſtellation, but a whole Heaven of Vertues, an entire Globe of Moral, and Chriſtian Perfections; an Univerſal Rectitude of the Will conforming us in all Points to God's Righteous Law, the Rule of our Righteouſneſs: Or if you will in two words, 'tis *Suum cuique* to give every One his Due; *Suum Deo* firſt, and then *Suum proximo*; Give God his Due, and your Neighbor too: Theſe are the integral parts of it. So that Righteouſneſs, as the great Rule of it, hath two Tables; or, if you will two *Hemiſpheres*, the upper, and the nether: Both ſo vaſt, that we cannot meaſure them in a Span (the Span of time allotted me;) I ſhall therefore contract them to the Occaſion, and give you onely ſome of thoſe particular Leſſons of Righteouſneſs,

Theogn. *Ethic.* v. 1. *Hom.* 12. *in* S. *Matth.*

teouſneſs, which this preſent Judgement of God upon our Land ſeems moſt clearly to take us forth, both in relation to God himſelf, and to our Neighbours; and then call you, and my ſelf to a ſerious Scrutiny, how well we have learn'd them, and ſo an end.

And firſt we begin (as we ought) in giving God his due; in rendring to God the things that are Gods. To limit this wide Univerſality too, and render it more proper, and peculiar, we may reduce all to that firſt of *Eſai's* three Songs mention'd at the beginning, *Glorifie ye*
C. xxiv. 15. *the Lord in the Fires*; giving him upon this ſad Occaſion the Glory of that great Trinity of his Attributes; the Glory of his *Power*, and Majeſty; the Glory of his *Juſtice* and Equity; the Glory of his Goodneſs and *Mercy*.

1. Give him the Glory of his Power and Greatneſs; which the Prophet calls, *ſinging for the Majeſty of the Lord*, Cap. xxiv. 15. or *beholding the Majeſty of the Lord, when his hand is lifted up*, in the verſe after my Text. How great and glorious our God is, who is in himſelf incomprehenſible, appears beſt by the glorious greatneſs of his Works. If he builds, it is a World, Heaven and Earth, and the Fulneſs of both. If he gives, it is his onely Son out of his Boſom, the Brightneſs of his Glory, and the expreſs Image of his perſon. If he rewards, 'tis a Crown, 'tis a whole

whole Heaven of Glories. If he be angry, he ſends a Deluge; opens the Cataracts of Heaven above, and breaks up the Fountains of the great Deep below, and pours forth whole Flouds of Vengeance: Or elſe he rains down Hell out of Heaven, and in a moment turns a land like the Garden of God into a dead Sea, and a lake of Brimſtone. If he diſcover himſelf by any overt expreſſion of his Power, though the Intention be meer Mercy and loving Kindneſs, Mortality ſhrinks from it, and cannot bear it. When his Glory deſcends on Mount *Sinai*, the people remove, and ſtand afar off, and *Let not God ſpeak with us* (ſay they) *leſt we die*: and *Depart from me, O Lord*, ſaith S. *Peter*, amaz'd at that miraculous draught of Fiſhes: How much more ſhould the Inhabitants of the World tremble before him, when his great and ſore Judgements are in the Earth: *Tremble thou Earth, the preſence of God* (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) even when he improves *the hard Rock into a ſpringing Well*: Much more, when *a fruitful land he turns into barrenneſs*, or a ſtately City into Aſhes, *for the wickedneſs of them that dwell therein. I am horribly afraid*, ſaith *David*, *for the ungodly that forſake thy Law*; and *I exceedingly fear, and quake*, ſaid *Moſes*, at the giving of it: But when our Lord ſhall come again to require it, *the Powers of Heaven ſhall be ſhaken* too;

Salvian.

Ex. xx. 18, 19.

Luc. v. 8.

Pſ. cxiv. 7, 8.

Pſ. cvii. 34.

Pſ. cxix. 53.

Hebr. xii. 21.

Matth. xxiv. 29.

too; the Angels themſelves (as S. *Chryſoſtom* interprets) though pure, and innocent Creatures ſhall tremble (θεΐξωσι) to ſee the ſeverity of that Judgement. How much rather ought we, wretched Creatures that we are, conſcious to our ſelves of Duſt, and Sin, to tremble, and quake at the Wrath of this dread Lord of the Univerſe; at who's Voice alone, the great Emperour *Caligula* runs under the Bed, and the mighty *Bel-ſhazzar's* loins are looſed, and his knees knock one againſt another, when God but writes bitter things againſt him on the Wall.

Hom. 77. in Matth.

Sueton. l. v. *n.* 51.

Dan. v. 6.

It were a vain Affectation, to attempt a Deſcription of the greatneſs of our late horrible *Devaſtation*. This were to be *Ambitioſus in Malis*, to chew over all our Wormwood, and our Gall again: This were *Rogum aſcia polire*, which the xii. *TABLES* forbad, to carve and paint the wood of our funeral pile. I ſhall onely call back your thoughts, to ſtand with me upon the proſpect of that horrid Theatre of the divine Judgements, and ſay, *Come hither, and behold the Works of the Lord, what Deſolation he hath made in the Earth*; and then who will not joyn with me to ſay upon ſo convincing an occaſion; We humble our ſelves under the Almighty hand of God, the Lord of all the World; We adore his power and Majeſty in lowly

Pſ. xlvi. 8.

lowly prostrations; before whom all the Nations of the World are as a *Drop of the Bucket*, the Globe of the Earth as the *small Dust* of the *Balance*, and who taketh up the Isles (even our Great *Britains* too, as we call them) as a very little thing. *Great and marvellous are thy Works, O Lord God Almighty! Who would not fear thee, and glorifie thy Name, when thy Judgments are thus manifest?* Thou hast brought them down that dwell on high, and laid the lofty City low, even to the Ground; the *Joyous* City of our Solemnities, the *Royal Chamber*, the *Emporium* of the World, the *Mart* of Nations, the very *Top Gallant* of all our Glory in the Dust. *Even so holy Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.* We say not to our God, *What do'st thou? Wherefore hath the Lord done thus to this great City?* We reply not, we answer not again: *The Lord hath spoken; Let all the Earth keep silence before him.* We acknowledge thy hand in it, O our God; we submit to thy good pleasure in it; we wait for thy Comfort, and thy Salvation in it. We meekly kiss the Rod that strikes us: With dying *Jacob* we desire to worship ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ῥάβδου, with perfect Resignation as we are able, *leaning*, and reposing upon the *top* of this thy severe *Rod*. For *shall we receive Good at the hand of our God, and shall we not receive Evil?* 'Tis the same Blessed Hand that distributes and

Isai. xl. 15.

Matth. xi. 26.

Heb. xi. 21.

Job ii. 10.

ſtrikes; and with equal Reverence and Affection we adore it, whether He opens it wide in Bounty, or contracts it cloſe in Severity: The One the divine *Rhetorick* to perſwade us to learn Righteouſneſs; the Other his more irrefragable *Logick* to convince and conſtrain us. And therefore We charge not our Maker fooliſhly; but meekly accept the puniſhment of our Iniquity. And having thus ador'd his power (which was the Firſt) we go on in the next place to acknowledge his Juſtice too; ſaying
Pſ. cxix. 137. with holy *DAVID*, *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and juſt are thy Judgments:* The ſecond part of God's Due,

2. Give him the Glory of his *Juſtice* alſo; and if you learn no other Righteouſneſs in his School, at leaſt learn His, and franckly confeſs it too. For though God's Judgments may be
Pſ. xxxvi. 6. ſecret, yet they cannot be unjuſt: *Like the great Deep* indeed, an *Abyſs* unfathomable; But though we have no Plumb-line of Reaſon, that can reach it, our Faith aſſures us, there's Juſtice
Pſ. xcvii. 2. at the Bottom. *Clouds and Darkneſs are round about him*, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*; but, as it follows, *Righteouſneſs and Judgment are the Habitation of his Throne:* So much we may eaſily diſcern through all the Veils and Curtains that invelop him, that Juſtice ſtands always faſt by his Judgment-ſeat. And therefore though it be a nice,

and

and a delicate point to aſſign the particular ſins, for which God hath thus ſorely afflicted us; yet muſt we declare (as we are warranted by ſacred Authority) *That God hath laid this heavy Judgment upon us All, as an Evidence of his Diſpleaſure for our Sins in general.* The Kings Declaration.

Not to engage in that Common Theme; we may clear it a little by the Light of our own *Fires*, (the particular Inſtrument of our Calamity) in two or three Reflections upon that. God ſpake his righteous *Law* at firſt out of the midſt of the *Fire*, *Exod.* xix. 18. And he ſhall appear from Heaven again in flaming *Fire*, 2 Theſ. i. 8. taking Vengeance on them that obey it not, ſaith the Apoſtle. Now as the Prophet *Amos* argues from another circumſtance of Terror, wherewith the Law was given, the ſound of the Trumpet (the firſt Trumpet certainly, we ever read of in any Record in the World, as the laſt Trumpet (the Apoſtle tells us) ſhall be 1 Cor. xv. 52. that of the Arch-angel to ſummon us to account for it) *Shall a Trumpet be blown* (and ſo ſay I, Amos iii. 6. ſhall a *Fire* be kindled) *in the City* (nay, a whole City become but one great Fire) *and the people not be afraid*; We not reflect upon our own Guiltineſs before God, who came at firſt with a *Fiery Law in his right hand* to teach us Deut. xxxiii. 2. our Duty, and ſhall come again at laſt *with fiery Indignation* at his left, *to devour* all thoſe Hebr. x. 27.

that perform it not? Again, Fire and Water are the two great Instruments of God's double Vengeance upon the World of the Ungodly: The One long since past recorded for our Instruction; the Other yet to come, the Matter (it ought to be, I am sure) of our continual Terror. *The World, that then was, perished by Water* (saith S. *Peter*) *and the World, that is now, is reserv'd unto Fire*: In the mean time, Fire and Water, things of commonest Use with us, are also the standing Metaphors almost in every Verse of Scripture, to express God's Judgments of all sorts: Is it not on purpose to reminde us, when ever we hear the sound, or make use of the things, or feel the smart of either, to reflect upon the heavy Wrath of God against Sin in his so solemn expressions of it? Once more; Fire is the *Tyrant* in Nature, the *King* of the Elements, the mighty *Nimrod* in the Material World. God hath given us this Active Creature for our Servant, and we degrade him to the meanest Offices, to the Drudgery of the Kitchin, and the labor of the Furnace. But God can infranchize him, when he please, and let him loose upon us; and for our Sins, of an useful servant, make him to us a rigorous, and a Tyrannical Master. You saw him the other Day, when he escap'd from all your Restraints, mockt all your Resistance, scorn'd

2 Pet. iii. 6, 7.

ſcorn'd the Limits, you would have ſet him: Wing'd with our Guilt, he flew triumphant over our proudeſt Heights, waving his curl'd Head, ſeeming to repeat us that Leſſon which holy S. *Auſtin* taught us long ſince, *That the inferior Creatures ſerve us Men, onely that we may ſerve him, who made both us and them too.* If we rebel againſt Heaven, Συωεκπολεμήσει ὁ Κόσμος, ſaith the *Wiſeman*; *the World ſhall riſe in Arms upon us, and fight with Him againſt the Unwiſe.* Even the holy Fires of the Altar too, though kindled from Heaven on purpoſe to propitiate an angry Deity, prov'd often through Man's provocations the Inſtruments of his Fury; the *Mercy-ſeat* became the Arſenal of Vengeance, and from the preſence of God himſelf went forth thoſe Flames that devour'd his Adverſaries: And all to teach us this Leſſon, That 'tis Sin puts the Thunder into Gods Hand, and turns Flames of Love into a conſuming Fire. Wiſd. v. 20.

And therefore dream no longer of *Granado's* or *Fire-Balls*, or the reſt of thoſe witty Miſcheifs; ſearch no more for *Bonteſieus* or *Incendiaries*, *Dutch* or *French*: The Dutch Intemperance, and the French Pride and Vanity, and the reſt of their Sins, we are ſo fond off, are infinitely more dangerous to us, than the Enmity of either Nation; for theſe make God

our

our Enemy too. Or if you'l needs finde out the Incendiary, look not abroad; *Intus hostis, intus periculum*, saith St. *Jerome*. Turn your Eyes inward into your own Bosoms; there lurks the great Make-bate, the grand *Bouteseu* between Heaven and us. Trouble not your selves with *Planetary* Aspects, or great *Conjunctions*; but for your own Oppositions direct and Diametral to God, and his Holy Law. Fear not the Signs of Heaven, but the Sins on Earth, which have made a Separation between you, and your God. 'Tis injurious to the sweet Influences of the Stars, to charge them with such dire Effects, as Wars, and Pestilences, and Conflagrations: *Divinæ Justitiæ opera hæc, sunt* (saith the Father) *& humanæ injustitiæ*. These are the products of God's Righteousuess upon our Unrighteousness. Wherefore glorifie we God in these our Fires, saying with the Prophet, *Righteousness belongs to thee, O Lord, but unto us confusion of Faces, as it is this day, because of our manifold Trespasses that we have trespassed against thee.*

Dan. ix. 7.

If yet it be expected I should be more *particular*, in assigning the very Sins that have occasion'd this heavy Judgment, 'tis a slippery place, and hard to keep firm footing in it. The mysterious Text of God's holy Providence (as I said before) is dark and obscure; and so much the

the more, because there are so many Interpreters, (for though there be no infallible Judge of the Sense of it, yet all Fingers itch to be doing;) their Conjectures so various, and full of contradiction, so tinctèd and debaucht with private prejudice, that they do but στρεβλοῦν, wrest it unskilfully, as they do the other holy Text, *Convertunt in mentem suam* (as the *Æthiopick* turns that place in S. *Peter*) torture, and torment it, till it confess their own Sense. As for the many spiteful, and unrighteous *Glosses* upon the sad Text of our present Calamity, (on which every Faction amongst us hath a *Revelation*, hath an *Interpretation*;) I will not mention, much less imitate them. *Justus Accusator sui*, saith the *Wiseman*. 'Tis a righteous thing for every Man to suspect himself, to look first into the plague of his own heart, and to be ready to say with the Disciples, *Master, Is it not I?* We are All overapt to charge one another foolishly enough; to take S. *Peter*'s counsel, ἵλεώς σοι, to be kinde and favorable to our selves in our Intrepretations and Censures; but God, methinks, at present seems to accuse us All.

2 Pet. iii. 16.

Prov. xviii. 17.

When a Judgment is particular and reacheth but a few, we have a savage promptness in condemning the sufferers, with, *This is God's just judgment for such a thing*, which we, it seems, like

like not, though perhaps God himself doth. So long as the Thunder-bolt flies over our own Heads, we hug our selves, and All is well; 'tis our dear pastime, and a high voluptuousness to sit and censure others, and flatter our selves, that we are more righteous than they. To meet with this ill Humor, God hath reacht us now an universal stroke that comes home to every Man: So that 'tis as our Prophet states it in the beginning of this *Sermon*, *As with the Prince and the Priest* (for כמו is both) *so with the people, as with the Master, and the Mistress, so with the Servant, as with the Buyer, and the Borrower, so with the Seller, and the Lender.* In fine, He is no Englishman that feels not this Blow: And therefore as the Judgment is Universal, let us give glory to God, and confess, that the Sin is so too, saying with the good *Nehemiah*, *Thou art just, O God, in All that is brought upon us; on our King, and on our Princes; on our Priests, and on our Prophets; on our Fathers, and on all thy People: For thou hast done Right, but we have All done Wickedly.* God give us Grace to take every one the shame that belongs properly to himself, and to joyn heartily together in a full *Chorus* at the last, repeating that excellent *Exomologesis* of holy *David*, with which I began this point, and shall now conclude it, *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and just*

Cap. xxiv. 2.

Cap. ix. 32, 33.

are

are thy Judgments. But there is another yet behinde——

Lastly, Give God the Glory of his Mercy too; that must in no wise be forgotten. 'Tis the priviledge and prerogative of Mercy, that it mixeth it self in all God's Works; even in Justice it self too. *He sendeth forth Lightnings with the Rain* (saith the *Psalmist*) *he bringeth the Winds out of his Treasuries.* Strange Furniture, one would think for a Treasury; Storms, and Tempests! But there is so very much of Mercy even in God's Judgments too, that they also deserve a place amongst his Treasures, ay and amongst ours too. For he licenseth not a Wind, or a Storm, lets not flie a flash of Lightning, or a Ball of Fire, but a Mercy goes along with it; comes flying to us (if we miss it not by our Negligence or Inadvertency) upon the Wings of that Wind; and discovers it self to us even by the Light of those Fires. And therefore turn not away your eyes in Horror, but study the *late Conflagration:* And even in the Dust and Ashes of our City, if we sift and examine them well, we may finde rich Treasures of Mercy hidden. 3.

S. Ambrose, *Suo jure omnibus Dei operibus superingreditur & supernatat.* Ps. cxxxv. 7.

Mercy first, That God spar'd us, and preserv'd us so long. For without his Divine Manutenency, our strongest Fabricks had faln immediately upon their very Builders. He, that made 1.

all things at first, by preserving makes them still; new makes them every Moment; and for his Will's sake alone they were, and are created. He carries Nature always in his Bosom, fostering and cherishing her; and that not onely, as she came out of his own hand, and bears the Impresses of his infinite Wisdom and Power; but as we have transform'd and disguis'd her by our petty skill; as she is fetter'd and shackeld by our silly Artifices: Even the World of Fancy too, the poor Attempts and Bunglings of Art, our Houses of Dirt and Clay (which we call Palaces, and so please our selves in) would quickly fall asunder, and moulder all into the Dust they consist off, did not an Almighty Hand uphold them. If he keep not the House and the City, in vain the Builder builds, and the Watchman wakes, and the Centinel stands *perdu*. And therefore give we him the glory of this Mercy, saying, *Thanks be to the Lord, who* so long *shew'd us marvellous great Kindness*, I say not with the *Psalm*, *in a strong City*, (though the strongest without Him is weakness) but in a very weak One: A City in the Meanness of the Materials, the Oldness of the Buildings, the streightness of some Streets, the ill Scituation of others, and many like Inconveniences, so expos'd to this dismal Accident, that it must needs have been long since

Ps. xxxi. 23.

since in Ashes, had not his miraculous Mercy preserv'd it, who, so long as He pleaseth (and that is just so long as we please Him) continues the Fire to us useful and safe, serviceable, and yet innocent, with as much ease, as he lays it asleep, and quiet in the Bosom of a Flint.

Mercy again, That he afflicts us at all; that we are yet in his School; that he hath not quite given us over, and turn'd us out as unteachable and incorrigible. *Felix, cui Deus dignatur irasci*, saith *Tertullian*; in *Davids* Language, *Blessed is the Man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him in thy Law*; send'st him thy Judgments, and learn'st him thy Righteousness. But to sin, and not be punisht, is the soreest punishment of all, saith S. *Chrysostome*. *Dimisit eos secundum desideria Cordis*, *He suffer'd them to walk after their own Heart's Lusts*, that's a dreadful portion: Let them alone, *Why should they be stricken any more?* that's *the prosperity of Fools that destroys them*, as *Solomon*; or as *David* phraseth it; This is for God *to rain Snares upon the ungodly: A horrible Tempest* indeed! as he there calls it, and worse then *the Fire and Brimstone* in the same Verse. 2.

Pf. xciv. 12.

Ἡ μεγάλη κόλασις τὸ ἁμαρτάνειν, καὶ μὴ κολάζεσθαι.

Pf. lxxxi. 13. Isai. i. 5. Prov. i. 32. Pf. xi. 6.

Mercy too, That he afflicts us himself, keeps us still under his own Discipline, and hath *not* yet *given us over unto the Will of our Adversaries*. 3.

Pf. xxvii. 14.

ſaries. The hand of an Enemy poyſons the Wound: His Malice or his Inſolence doubles and trebles the Vexation. The Malignity of the Inſtrument may invenim a Scratch into a *Gangrene.* But the Bleſſed Hand of God, even when it ſtrikes, drops *Balſom.* His very Rods are bound up in ſilk, and ſoftneſs, and dipt before hand in *Balm:* He wounds, that he may heal, and in wounding heals: *Una, eademque Manus Vulnus, opemque*—. And therefore may we never be beaten by the hand of a cruel, and inſulting Slave: But *let* our *Righteous* Lord himſelf *ſmite us, and it ſhall be a Kindneſs; let him correct us, and it ſhall be an excellent Oyl.* O *let us* ſtill *fall into the Hands of God (for great are his Mercies) but let us not fall into the hands of Men.*

Pſ. cxli. 5.

2 Sam. xxiv. 14.

4. Mercy laſtly in the Degree of the Affliction; That he hath puniſht us leſs than our Iniquities deſerve; afflicted us in Meaſure; corrected us in Judgment, not in his Fury, for then we had been utterly brought to Nothing: That We have had our Lives for a prey, and are as ſo many Fire-brands pluckt out of the Burning. And therefore, Why ſhould a living Man complain? Say we rather as *Abraham* did in the caſe of *Sodom,* when he had that horrible ſcene of Vengeance now in his Eye, *We are but Duſt and Aſhes:* Not onely Duſt in the courſe of ordinary

Gen. xviii. 27.

ordinary Frailty, but Aſhes too in the Merit of a far ſharper Doom; deſerve, that God ſhould bring us to Duſt, nay, even turn us to Aſhes too, as our Houſes. *It is of the Lord's Mercies,* Lam. iii. 22. *that We* our ſelves alſo *are not conſumed, becauſe his Compaſſions fail not*; that any part of our City is ſtill remaining; that God hath left us yet a holy place to aſſemble in, ſolemnly to acknowledge (as we do this Day) his moſt miraculous Mercy: That when all our Wit was puzzeld, and all our Induſtry tir'd out; when the Wind was at the Higheſt, and the Fire at the Hotteſt, and all our Hopes were now giving up the ghoſt, Then He, whoſe ſeaſon is our greateſt extremity; He, who *ſtayeth his rough Wind* Cap. xxvii. 8. *in the Day of the Eaſt-wind*, as 'tis in the next Chapter; He, who alone ſets Bounds to the Rage of the Waters, reſtrain'd alſo on the ſudden, the Fury of this other mercileſs and unruly Element, by the Interpoſition of his Almighty *Hucuſque*, Hitherto ſhalt thou go, and no further. Ay this deſerves indeed to be the Matter of a Song: Joy in the Lord upon ſo great an Occaſion, upon ſo noble an Experience, ſits not unhandſome on the Browe of ſo ſad a Day as this is. *It ſhall be ſaid in that Day,* Cap. xxv. 9. ſaith our Prophet, (and let us All ſay it; ſay it with Triumph, and Jubilee too,) *Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and He hath ſaved us;*

us; *This is the Lord, we will be glad, and rejoyce in his Salvation:* —The *third*, and laſt part (we ſhall mention) of God's Due, the Glory of his *Mercy*.

2. And now having thus clear'd and ſecur'd the Fountain of Righteouſneſs, in the Diſcharge of ſome part of our Duty to God (where regularly it muſt begin;) it remains, *Ut ducatur Rivus Juſtitiæ de fonte Pietatis*, as S. *Gregory* ſpeaks: It muſt not be a Fountain ſeal'd, or ſhut up within its ſelf; (Religion is not, as ſome would have it, a *Superſedeas* to Common Honeſty; the performing our Duty towards God, no Diſcharge of our Duty to Man:) In
Amos v. 24. the next place it ſhould *run down like a River*, in mighty Streams of Righteouſneſs to all our Neighbors round about us; the other great Branch, the ſecond Table, or (if you will) the other *Hemiſphere* in this great Globe of Righteouſneſs. And here, *Ecce novas Hyadas, aliumque Oriona* — So many new Aſteriſms and Conſtellations of Vertues appear, that the time will not give leave to number them, or call them all by their Names: I can onely touch lightly the greater Circles, ſome of the more comprehenſive Lines and Meaſures of them in theſe few Generals, and ſo paſs on.

'Tis

'Tis Righteousness Indefinitely *First*, and so Universally. So that 'twill not be sufficient to take forth some part of it in God's School, a line or two, it may be, of our great Lesson, and neglect the Rest; to study some one Page or Paragraph, and tear all the Book besides; to break the Tables (to farr worse Effect, than *Moses* did) and content our selves with some sorry Fragment: No, What ever goes under the common stile of Universal Justice; Whatever falls within the large Bosom of that comprehensive *Epitome*, into which our Lord himself abridg'd the Law and the Prophets, *All things whatsoever ye would, that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them*; Whatever comes within compass of that Νόμος Βασιλικὸς as S. *James* call it, *the Royal Law* (the latter part of the holy *Institutes*, the other tome of the Christian *Pandects*, *the second great Commandment like the first*, as our Saviour styles it) *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self*; Even all the Offices and Instances of Duty between Man and Man; (Reverence and Obedience to our Superiors, Courtesie and Humanity to our Equals; Kindness and Condescension to our Inferiors; Gratitude and Thankfulness to our Benefactors; Justice and Upright-dealing towards All; Truth in our Words, and Faithfulness in our Trusts, and

1. Matth. vii. 12. Jam. ii. 8. Matth. xxii. 38, 39.

Con-

Constancy to our Promises, and Candor, and Sincerity, and Honesty in all our Actions: And yet further and higher, (for 'tis a Righteousness improv'd, and heightned, or at least interpreted by our Lord into *Love*, and so obligeth us beyond the strict Measures of Common Justice, and not onely renders, what is legally due, but gives and forgives beyond it;) Equity and Moderation to those, that are any way obnoxious to us; Mildness and Gentleness to those, that have any way offended us; Sympathie and Compassion towards them that suffer; Mercy and Bounty to them that need; Goodness, and Peaceableness, and Charity to all the World:) These are all parts of this great Lesson, and whatever else may help to denominate us *The Righteous Nation that keepeth the Truth* (as 'tis in the second Verse of this Chapter) *or the City, in which dwells Righteousness.*

2. But then as 'tis Righteousness indefinitely,
Ps. cxix. 96. (*the Commandment exceeding broad*, as *David* speaks, wide in the Extension; so is it also as Deep in the Intension,) 'tis Righteousness *Internally* and *Spiritually* too; as being a Righteousness taught us by God's, and not by Mans Judgments onely, and consequently must have an Effect proportionable: 'Tis when *Thy* Judgments are in the Earth, Men will learn — As the *Jews*, while *their fear towards God was taught*

taught them by the Precepts of Men, drew near to him, and honored him with their Mouth onely, *but remov'd their Hearts far* away *from him, Isai.* xxix. 13: Upon the same Ground, our Righteousness will never exceed the Righteousness of Scribes, and Pharisees Hypocrites, must needs prove Noise, and Appearance onely, a meer and a vain Semblance, if we learn it in no higher School than Mans, take it forth from the *XII Tables* onely, not from the Two, and have no other Tutor in it than *Solon*, or *Lycurgus*, or *Justinian*. For the Derivation can return no higher than the Fountain-Head; and what is taught us onely by *the Statutes of Omri*, or *at Cesar's Judgment-seat*, will never come up to what the perfect Law of God requires. While we are under this lower, and external Discipline onely, if we can but skulk, and shift, and play least in sight, and seem to be Righteous, though we are not so; *Recti in Curia*, though not *upright in Heart*: Or, if we be discovered and impleaded too, if we can, whether by Power or Artifice, break through the venerable Cobweb, and run under the miserable shelter of a Temporal Indemnity at these lower Bars: Why, All is well; with *Solomon*'s Wanton we wipe our Mouths, and are suddenly very Virgins again, not onely safe, but innocent too. But though Humane Laws exact onely outward Prov. xxx. 20

Compliances, assume not to themselves to judge the Heart, because they cannot discern it, nor take Cognizance of secret Thoughts and Purposes, further than they are declar'd by overt Acts: Yet God is a Spirit, and a Discerner of the inmost Thoughts and Intentions; and his Law Spiritual too, and given to the Spirit; and the Righteousness taught in his School, is not a Carcase, or an Outside onely, but a living Soul, and a Spirit of Righteousness: And by consequence it stays not in the outward Act (the proper Object of Humane Laws and Provisions;) restrains not onely open violences (such as the Judgment-seat of Man condemns, and the Scaffold, or the Gibbet take notice off;) not onely smooths and polisheth the outward Garb, to render that plausible in the eyes of the World: But goes yet further and deeper, even to the Heart; composeth the whole Inner-Man too, and labors to approve that to the Righteous Judge, who sees not as Man sees; and in fine, calls us up to that glorious height of the Primitive Christians in *Justin Martyr*, who obey'd indeed the Municipal Laws of their Countrey, but out-liv'd them too, and surmounted them far, Τοῖς ἰδίοις βίοις νικῶντες τοὺς νόμους, as he speaks; they contented not themselves with so scant Measures, but flew a higher and a nobler pitch, aiming at a more refin'd and perfect Righteousness,

ness, the worthy Effect of Gods Judgments, and not of Mans onely; taught in his School alone, and not at our Tribunals. And then

Lastly, 'Tis Righteousness *Positively* and *Affirmatively* too. For though the Decalogue is almost all over *Negative* in the Stile and Form of it; yet, our Lord, by reducing all the Precepts of it to one *Affirmative* (*Love*,) and also by his *Affirmative* Glosses or Additions to it in his *Sermon* on the *Mount*, seems to have authorised the Rule of their Exposition, receiv'd generally by Christian Divines, *That the Negative still infers the Affirmative*, and that there are many *Yeas* conceal'd in the Bosom of every such *No*. So that however 'tis indeed a part of our Duty, Not to Murther, and not to Slander, and not to Covet, and the like, (an Obligation consequent upon God's prohibition; and he takes it well, when for his sake we abstain from the Evil, we are inclin'd or strongly solicited to, and so accepts graciously our very *Nothing*, as I may call it, our *not doing* amiss; thus giving us leave to inclose, as it were, a part of our Waste, and to raise some Revenue upon it:) Yet this is so much short of the Height of the Lesson we are to learn in God's School, that 'tis onely the unlearning something that might obstruct it; so far from making us truly *Righteous*, that it can onely stile us *Innocent*, and set us *Extra vitia* 3.

rather than *Intra virtutem.* We muſt not then content our ſelves with a *Negative* Righteouſneſs; nor confine, and limit it within the ſorry
Luc.xxiii.11. Bounds of the Phariſaical Boaſt, *That we are not, as other Men are Extortioners or Unjuſt:* In ſome Caſes he is unjuſt too, that gives not his own, as well as he that takes away what is
Pſ.cxii.9. Iſai.lviii.7,8. anothers: In the Sacred Dialect, Alms-deeds are Juſtice too; even Acts of Mercy, and Bounty to thoſe that need them, *ſtricti Juris*, a part of our Righteouſneſs ſometimes ſo indiſpenſable, as not to be omitted without Sin. And therefore glorifie thy ſelf no longer, that thou do'ſt Harm to no Man:

Juvenal. Sat. xiv. ——*Cum dicis ſtultum, qui donat Amico,*
Qui paupertatem levat, attollitque propinqui,
Et ſpoliare doces —— could the Heathen Poet ſay. He robs his Neighbor, that relieves him not: He ſpoils his Friend, that in ſome Caſes doth not ſupply him. And though 'tis
2 Cor.vii.2. well (*a good Degree*) if we can ſay with S. *Paul, I have wronged no Man*; yet he onely is perfectly blameleſs in this kinde, *Qui ne in eo quidem*
Lib.i. Epiſt. 14. ad Celantiam. *ulli noceat, quo prodeſſe deſiſtat*, as S. *Jerome* excellently; who doth not this Evil to his Neighbor, that he omits to do him all the Good he can. Thou didſt not burn thy Neighbors houſe, (a ſtrange piece of uncouth Righteouſneſs!) But do'ſt thou receive him into thy own,

now

now he is harborless? Thou hast not oppress, or impoverisht thy Brother; 'Tis well: But is thy Abundance the Supply of his *Want* in this present exigent? thy Superfluity, the Ransom and Redemption of his extream Necessities? If not, Remember, that *Dives* is in torments, not for robbing *Lazarus*, but for not relieving Sin: And the dreadful Decretory Sentence proceeds at the last Day, not for oppressing the poor, but for not feeding, not cloathing, not visiting them: A Reflection very common indeed; yet never more proper or seasonable, than at this time, when God presents us an Object of Charity, the greatest, I think, and the most considerable that was ever offer'd to this Nation, and when Heaven and Earth expect, that something extraordinary should be done. Matth. xxv.

I have now opened the Book, and laid it before you, and given you a short Draught of this very important Lesson: A Lesson so considerable, that our Wise and Good God thinks it worth the while to rout Armies, and sink Navies; to burn up Cities, and turn Kingdoms upside down; to send Wars, and Plagues, and Conflagrations amongst us; to set open all his Schools, and ply all his severest Methods to teach it us the more effectually. Think now, that he looks down this Day from Heaven to take

take Notice of our Proficiency; to ſee how far we are advanc'd by theſe his Judgments in learning Righteouſneſs. And is it poſſible, we ſhould ſtand out any longer? Can we ſtill reſiſt ſo powerful a Grace? Are not the parts of the Text by this time, happily met together? and the Truth of it accompliſht, and exemplified in us to the full? —Gods Judgments on us, and his Righteouſneſs in us? Who would not think, and hope ſo? But as S. *Jerome* complains of his Age (which was indeed very calamitous) *Orbis Romanus ruit, & tamen Cervix noſtra non flectitur*: The World ſinks and cracks about our Ears, and yet our Neck as ſtiff, and the Creſt of our Pride as lofty, and as erect as ever. How few are they that repent in Duſt and Aſhes, even Now, that God hath laid our City in Duſt, and our Houſes in Aſhes! Look we firſt upon the Text, and then upon our ſelves, and we muſt ingenuouſly acknowledge, That whatever Abatements or Diminutions to the Height of the deſign'd Event of God's Judgments upon us the Text, or any *Verſion* of it note, or imply, our wretched evil Lives do but too plainly expreſs and juſtifie. For—

1. Who are they that are ſaid here to learn Righteouſneſs in the Text? Not always the Afflicted themſelves, it ſeems; but ſome others that ſtand by and look on. For 'tis not to

to be omitted, that the phrase manifestly varies in the parts of the Proposition: *Judgments in the Earth*, or upon the Land, some particular Countrey; and *the World* at large, or some few in it *learn Righteousness*. Thus *Tyrus shall be devour'd with Fire*, saith the Prophet: *Ashkelon shall see it, and fear; Gaza and Ekron shall be very sorrowful:* But not a word how *Tyre* her self is affected. God forbid it should with us! May it never be said, that any of our Neighbors make better use of our Calamities, than we our selves! Have we any so hard-hearted amongst us, that can look upon so sad a Spectacle, as if they sate all the while in the Theater, or walkt in a Gallery of Pictures; little more concern'd, than at the Siege of *Rhodes*, or the Ruines of *Troy*? Shall any Neighbor-City say wisely —*Mea res agitur, jam proximus ardet Ucalegon*—? Shall our enemies themselves (the Sober and the Wise amongst them, at the least) tremble at the Relation, and we continue stupid, and senseless? Shall *Constantinople* and *Alexandria* resent it, and we not regard it as we ought? Nay, shall *China* and *Peru* (it may be) *Surat* and *Mexico*, both the *Indies* hear, and be affected with it, and we our selves insensible? Shall the Inhabitants of the World abroad warm themselves at our Fires, with kindly and holy Heats; while in the mean time

Zach. ix. 4, 5.

time our Repentings are not kindled, nor our Charity inflam'd, and our Devotion as cold and frozen as ever? Shall our Mountain (which we said in our jolly pride should never be removed) be fulminated, and thunder-strook, but the Blessed shower, that follows, the Instruction, that descends after, like the Rain, slide off to the Vallies, to Others, that are round about us?

Luc. xix. 41. Our Lord *wept* over *Jerusalem*, *because she knew not then* (at forty years distance) *the time of her Visitation*; *for the Days will come*, saith He, *when there shall not be left one stone upon another*: But Wo is me! Our Day is come already, and our Visitation now actually upon us; and yet I fear, we will not know it, as we ought. For —

2. Reflect a little upon the *Tense* of the *Verb*, how that varies too in the parts of the Proposition: The Judgments *Are* in the Earth, and the Inhabitants *Will* learn — (So the Vulgar Latin and the English:) 'Tis still *per verba de futuro*. For we list not to hand-fast our selves to God Almighty, to make our selves over to him by present Deed of Gift; but would fain, forsooth, bequeath our selves to him a Legacy in our last Will and Testament. Ay but *In Necessitatibus nemo Liberalis*: 'Tis not a free or a noble Donation, which we bestow, when we can keep it no longer our selves: For such

such a Bequest we may thank Death, rather than the Testator, saith S. *Chrysostome*. But we are all Clinicks in this point; would fain have a Baptism in Reserve, a Wash for all our Sins, when we cannot possibly commit them any more. Like *Felix* the unjust Governor, when S. *Paul* Reasons of Righteousness, our Heads begin to ake, and presently we adjourn, with, *Go thy way for this time*; Καιρὸν δὲ μεταλαβόντες, (as he pretended) when we have Time and Opportunity, and convenient Leisure (which we read not, that he ever found) in plain English, when we have nothing else to do, or can do nothing else, then we'll take forth this Lesson; — Learn Righteousness, as *Cato* did Greek, *Jam Septuagenarius*, just when we are a dying; — Begin then to con our part, when we are ready to be hist off the Stage, and Death is now pulling off our properties. But take we heed in time: He may prove a false Prophet, that promiseth himself to *die the Death of the Righteous*, when he hath *lov'd*, and pursu'd the the Ways, and *Wages of Unrighteousness* all his life long: Who thinks, if he can but shape the last faint Breath he draws into a formal pretence of forgiving all the World, and a slie Desire of being forgiven; Upon these two hangs the whole stress of his Righteousness, he goes out of God's School upon fair terms, and thinks to

τῷ θανάτῳ χάρις, οὐ σοι. *Hom.* xviii. in *Ephes.*

Acts xxiv. 25

render a plauſible Account of himſelf. No no; the great Leſſon of the Text is harder and deeper than ſo: 'Tis that we muſt ſweat for, 'tis that we may bleed for: 'Tis All, that *Adam* loſt, and All, that *Chriſt* came to recover: 'Tis the Buſineſs of our whole life, and 'tis deſperate Folly and Madneſs to defer to learn it till Death, when God now calls us to account for it. Though the Verb in ſome Verſions be future (as I ſaid) yet ſtill 'tis *Diſcent Habitatores*, we muſt learn it, while we dwell here in the World; and who can ſecure us that beyond the next moment? When once we remove hence, there's no School beyond: The Platonick *Eruditorium* in *ORIGEN* (a place under Ground, I know not where, in which ſeparated Souls are ſuppos'd to learn what they miſt off, or neglected here) as very a Fable as the Platonick Purgatory. As *there is no Work, nor Labor*; ſo *no Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wiſdom in the Grave.* The Schools are all in this World: All beyond is Priſon, and Dungeon, and place of Torment, for ſuch as learn not their Duty here; Fire without Light, and utter Darkneſs.

Eccleſ. ix. 10.

3. Again, *They did learn* (ſo the *Syriac*, and the Interlineary Latin) *when thy Judgments were in the Earth:* For there is an *Ellipſis* in the Original of the former clauſe, and the Verb Sub-

Substantive may be supplied either way, when thy Judgments *Are* or *Were* in the Earth: And the Conjunction may seem to stand fair for the later, כַּאֲשֶׁר *in quantum*, or *juxta quod*; עַל־פִּי (as R. *David* glosseth it) *qua mensura, aut modo*; and so the *Syriac*, *Qualia Judicia, talem Justitiam didicerunt:* So much Judgment, so much Justice; Righteousness they *did* learn, just while God's Rod was over them, and no longer. Thus while God's Plagues lay heavy upon *Pharaoh*, even that stiff neck bow'd, and that hard heart was softned; As Iron in a quick Fire relents and melts; but take it out of the Furnace, and it grows hard again, nay worse, Churlish and unmalleable: And so he, *When he saw that there was Respite*, saith the Text, or a breathing time, *He hardned his heart*, Ex. viii. 15. And do not we all the same? Like teeming Women, while the pangs are upon us, *we have sorrow*; when some great Affliction gives us a smart Visit, strikes home, and deep, we seem to be a little sensible: Ay but the Throws once over, οὐκέτι μνημονεύει, saith our Lord, the Woman remembers them no more; and so we, *If but for a little space Grace be shewed us, if God gives us but a little Respite in our Bondage*, like *Israel* newly returned from *Babel*, *we streight forget his Commandments*; which made the good *Ezra* asham'd and blush to lift up Joh. xvi. 21.

his Face to Heaven; *Ezra*, Cap. ix. Verſ. 8, 10.

Happy We, if, as *Pliny* adviſeth his friend *Maximus*, *Tales eſſe ſani perſeveremus, quales futuros profitemur infirmi*; if we continue ſuch in Health, as we promiſe to be upon our ſick-beds. But Alas! *Convaluit*; *Manſit, ut ante.* How few with *David* pay the Vows which they ſpake with their Mouths, when they were in trouble? Do not the engagements on the ſick-bed vaniſh, like the Dreams of the ſick, forgotten, as if they had never been? I appeal to your own Boſoms; though affected at firſt with this late diſmal Accident, doth it not prove to you a Nine-days Wonder, and your Thoughts, though much ſtartled at firſt, by degrees reconcile to it? Do not your Devotions begin to grow cold with the Fires; rak'd up, like thoſe dying ſparks in dead Aſhes, and buried in the Duſt; —*Ignes ſuppoſiti Cineri doloſo?* Juſt as our Prophet ſtates it here, *While thy Judgments were upon them, they learn'd*; But as it follows immediately, *Fiat Gratia Impio, Let Favor be ſhewed to the Wicked*, the leaſt Intermiſſion or kinde Interval, *and he will not learn Righteouſneſs*, ſaith the Text expreſly; he ſoon lays by his Book, and gives over. But

Lib. vii. Ep. 27.

Pſ. lxvi. 14.

Verſ. 10.

4. Laſtly,

4. Lastly, What is it that we learn? or, to what good end or purpose? The *Chaldee* Paraphrast interposeth here a very Material and Operative word, *Discent operari*, *they will learn* לְמֶעְבַּד *to do*, *or to work Righteousness*. And this Addition shews us another of our Defects; cuts off, I fear, above half the Roll of our Learners at once. We live (as I said) in a learned Age: But in all this Croud and Throng of Learners, how few put themselves in good earnest into God's School? And of them that do, how much fewer yet take forth their Lesson aright? —Learn any thing else they will, but not Righteousness; and if that, any thing, but to do it? But this is not Ὀρθοτομεῖν, *rightly to divide*; this is to mangle the Text, and to saw *Isaiah* asunder again. Would learning, or talking, or pretending serve the turn, We might finde Righteousness enough in the World: We can define it, and distinguish it, Criticize upon the Word, and dispute of the Thing without end: We stuff our Heads with the Notion, and tip our Tongues with the Language, and fill the World with our pretences to it: But *Little Children*, saith S. *John*, (O ye World of Learners) *Be not deceived*, (Let no Man seduce you into this piece of *Gnosticism*, as if to learn, or to know, were sufficient; No,) Ὁ ποιῶν, *He that doth Righteousness, he is Righteous*. *Non fortia loquimur*, 1 Joh. iii. 7.

loquimur, ſed vivimus, ſaith S. *Cyprian*; The life of Religion is Doing. What we know, we
Phil. iii. 16. muſt practice too; *Whereto we have already attained, we muſt walk in it*, ſaith the Apoſtle. They, that follow'd Chriſt, were firſt indeed
Acts xi. 26. cald *Diſciples*, that is, Learners, (for there we muſt begin;) But they ſoon after commenc'd Chriſtians at *Antioch*, Anointed to Action, as the word implies; and this Name ſticks by them ſtill, as the more eſſential. Their Oil muſt not be ſpent all in the Lamp, *In Schola Sapientiæ*, that they may ſhine by Knowledge; they muſt do their Exerciſes too *In Gymnaſio Juſtitiæ*, be anointed to the *Agon*, and to the Combat (as the Champions of old;) and if they expect the Crown of Righteouſneſs, muſt not onely learn Righteouſneſs, but learn to do it.

AND therefore (to ſhut up All, and to inforce it a little upon ſuch Topicks, as the Text, and the ſad Face of things amongſt us ſuggeſt;) Let us no longer trifle with God Almighty, now we finde to our coſt, that He is in good earneſt with us. *Be not deceived*; God, I'm ſure, *is not mock'd*. 'Tis not our Faſting, and looking demur a little, and hanging down the Head, like a Bull-ruſh for a Day; 'Tis not a few Grimaces of Sorrow, a ſad word or two,

or

or a weeping Eye will serve the turn: — Our hearts must bleed too, our Souls must be afflicted, and mourn for our old Unrighteousnesses, and forsake them too, and renounce them all for ever; and yet further, take forth new Lessons of Righteousness *in all holy Conversations and Godlinesses*, as S. *Peter* speaks, even in All the instances of Piety, and Justice, and Charity, ye heard off even now, or all this holy Discipline of God is lost, and spent in vain upon us. For *this is all the Fruit*, saith our Prophet, *to take away sin*: If that remain still in us, Adversity is a bitter Cup indeed. To keep our sins, and hold them fast, even when God's Judgments are upon us for them, this is with *Copronymus*, to pollute the Fountain that should wash us, to defile the salutary Waters of Affliction, to prophane the holy Fires of God's Furnace, and to pass through the Fire to *Moloch*, to some reigning and domineering sin, some Tyrant-lust or Mistress-passion. Correction without Instruction, this is the Scourge of Asses, not the Discipline of Men, nor the Rod of the Sons of Men. To suffer much, and not to be at all the better for it, 'tis certainly one of the saddest portions that can befal us in this World; if not the fore-boding and prognostick of a far sadder yet to come, the very Beginnings of Hell here, the Foretasts of that

2 Pet. iii. 11.

Cap. xxvii. 9.

that Cup of Bitterneſs, of which the Damned ſuck out the Dreggs.

And wilt thou after all this hide the ſweet Morſel under thy Tongue, when thou ſenſibly perceiv'ſt it already turning into the Gall of Aſps? —Still long for the delicious conſecrated portion, and ſnatch it greedily from God's Altars, though thou ſeeſt thy Fingers burn, and thy Neſt on fire with it? —Still retain the old Complacence in thy ſparkling Cup, though thou feel'ſt it already biting like a Serpent, and ſtinging like an Adder? —ſay ſtill, *Stoln Waters are ſweet*, though like thoſe bitter Ones of Jealouſie, thou perceiv'ſt them carry a Curſe along with them into thy very Bowels? Dare *we thus provoke the Lord to Jealouſie? Are we ſtronger than He? Gird up now thy loyns like a Man*, thou ſtouteſt, and gallanteſt of the Sons of Earth. *Haſt thou an Arm like God? or canſt thou thunder with a Voice like him?* Wilt thou *ſet the Briars and Thorns* of the Wilderneſs *againſt him in Battel-Array*? or canſt thou *dwell with everlaſting Burnings*? *Or deſpiſeſt thou the Riches of his Goodneſs and Forbearance; not knowing* (refuſing to know) *that the Long-ſuffering of our Lord is Salvation, and that his Goodneſs leadeth thee to Repentance*? If not, know aſſuredly, that thy Hardneſs and Impenitent Heart,

Prov. ix. 17.

1 Cor. x. 22.

Job xxxviii. 3.

Job xl. 9.

Iſai. xxxiii. 14.

Rom. ii. 4.

2 Pet. iii. 15.

heart do but treaſure up for thee, yet a fiercer, and a more inſupportable Wrath.

And therefore let us not flatter our ſelves, nor think that God hath now emptied his Quiver, and ſpent all his Artillery upon us: Let us not come forth delicately with the fooliſh *Agag*, ſaying, *Surely the Bitterneſs of Death is paſt*: No, the Dregs of the Cup of Fury are ſtill behinde; God grant, we be not forc'd at laſt to drink them, and ſuck them up. *Great Plagues remain for the ungodly*, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*. *Væ unum abiit*; *Ecce duo veniunt*. *One Wo is paſt, but behold there come two Woes more*; *for the reſt of Men that were not kil'd by the former Plagues, repented not*, *Apoc.* ix. 12, 20. When God's Rods and his *Ferulae* (the Diſcipline of Children) are contemn'd, he hath a laſh of Scorpions to ſcourge the obſtinate. When the Ten dreadful Plagues are ſpent all upon a ſtubborn *Egypt* without effect, there's a Red Sea yet in Reſerve, that at laſt ſwallows All: And if our preſent Afflictions reform us not, that we ſin no more; take we heed, leſt yet a worſe thing befal us. Remember, that when the Touch of God's little Finger did not terrifie us, he ſoon made us feel the ſtroke of his heavy hand. If the more benign, and benedict Medicines will not work, nor ſtir us at all, he can prepare us a rougher *Recipe*, or a ſtronger *Doſe*;

1 Sam. xv. 32

Pſ. xxxii. 11.

retrive and bring back his former Judgements in ſharper Degree, or elſe ſend upon us new ones, which we never dream off.

The Devil of Rebellion, and Diſobedience, which not long ſince poſſeſt the Nation, rent and tore it till it ſom'd again, and pin'd away in lingring Conſumptions; that caſt it oft times into the Fire, and oft times into the Water (calamities of all ſorts) to deſtroy it; is now through God's Mercies caſt out, and we ſeem to ſit quiet, and ſober at the feet of our Deliverer, cloth'd, and in our right Minds again. But yet this *ill* ſpirit, this reſtleſs Fury (this unquiet, and dreadful *Alaſtor*, the eldeſt ſon of *Nemeſis*, and heir apparent to all the Terrors and Miſchiefs of his Mother) walks about day and night, ſeeking Reſt, and finds none; and he ſaith in his heart, I will return ſome time or other to my Houſe, from whence I came out. Oh let us take heed of provoking that God, who alone chains up his Fury, leaſt for our Sins he permit him to return once more, with ſeven other Spirits more wicked than himſelf, and ſo our laſt Eſtate prove worſe than the former.

The Sword of the Angel of Death, which the laſt year cut down almoſt a hundred thouſand of us, may ſeem to have been glutted with our Blood, and to have put up it ſelf into

into the scabbard. *Quiesce & sile*, as the Prophet speaks: God grant it may rest here, and be still. But, as it followes there, *How can it be quiet, if the Lord give it a new Commission against us?* Methinks I see the hand still upon the Guard, and unless we prevent it by our speedy Repentance, it may quickly be drawn again more terrible than ever, new furbisht, and whetted with the keener edge, and point, our wretched Ingratitude must needs have given it. The Sun of Righteousness was ready to rise upon us with healing in his Wings, to clear our Heaven again, and to scatter the Cloud of the last years unhealthiness. But yet, methinks, this slow-moving cloud hangs still o're our Heads, hovers yet in View, with God knows how many Plagues and Deaths in the Bosom of it: and without our serious Amendment we have no Rainbow to assure us, that we shall not again be drencht in that horrible Tempest. Though the best Naturalists say, *That great publick Fires are a proper Remedy for the Plague*, Yet God, if he be angry can send a ruffling Wind into the very Ashes of our City, blow them into the Air, and turn them, as those of the *Egyptian* Furnace, into a Blain, and a Botch, and a Plague sore upon us.

Jer. xlvii. 6.

Diemerbr. de Peste. Noviomag.

Ex. ix. 8, 9.

Nay even out of thoſe dead Aſhes can He raiſe yet a fiercer Flame, to conſume what ſtill remains. *As the lightning comes out of the Eaſt*, ſaith our Lord, *and ſhineth even unto the Weſt, ſo ſhall my coming be*, (*ſc:* to deſtroy *Jeruſalem*,) *and wherever the Carcaſe is, will the Eagles be gathered together*, Matth. xxiv. Fire is the Eagle in Nature; nothing in the Elementary World mounts ſo high to its place, and ſtoops ſo low to its prey: the two properties God himſelf aſcribes to that Bird, *Job xxxix.* 27-30. And if we ſtill refuſe obſtinately to be gathered, like Chickens under our Lord's Wing, he can again let looſe this Bird of Prey this Eagle of Heaven upon us; and from the Eaſt, where it began before, flie it home like Lightning ἕως δυσμῶν even to the utmoſt Weſt, to ſeize, and to devour where ever there is the leaſt Quarry remaining.

Or if this move us not, let us remember that we have another City upon the Waters, a floating Town of moveable Forts and Caſtles, the Walls and Bulwarks of the Nation; ſtronger than thoſe of Braſs, the Fable ſpeaks off. As we deſire that God would ever *fill their Sails with proſperous Gales*, and ſtill *bring them home with Honor, and Victory, and good Succeſs*, Let us take heed that we fight not againſt

against them too. Our Sin, like a Talent of Lead, may sink them to the Bottom; Our Lusts, and Passions, and Animosities may fire them; our Drunkenness, and deep Excesses may drown them; our Vollies of Oaths and Blasphemies may pierce them; nay, our Seditious Murmurings, and Privy Whisperings may blow them over. For God is *Piorum Rupes, Reorum Scopulus*; a Rock to found the Just upon, but a Shelf to shipwrack, and confound the Unrighteous.

And yet all these are but the common Roads, and ordinary Instances of God's Displeasures: But he hath also, besides, and beyond all these, unknown *Treasures of Wrath*, vast stores of hidden Judgments (for *who knows the Power*, or the extent *of his Anger?*) Laid up in those secret Magazines, where his Judgments are, when they are not in the Earth, reserv'd as his dreadful Artillery *against the time of trouble*, *against the day of Battel and War*, as he speaks himself, *Job* xxxviii. 23. Oh let us take heed of *treasuring up to our selves Wrath against that day of Wrath, and the Revelation of his righteous Judgment.* Ps.xc. ii. Rom.i. 5.

And now what shall I say more, if all that hath been said hitherto, prove ineffectual? The Text affords yet one Expedient as the *Chaldee* Paraphrast may seem to have understood בְּמָא דְדִינָךְ תַּקּוֹן, &c.

ſtood it: *Becauſe thy Judgment*, ſaith he (not מִשְׁפָּט as in the *Hebrew*, but דִּינָא or חִנָּא רַבָּא as the *Jews* call it, and S. *Jude* from them, *The Judgment of the great Day*) becauſe that Judgment, though not as yet in the Earth, *is* yet *fixt*, and appointed, and prepared *for* all *the Earth* לְאַרְעָא in the *Hebrew* it ſelf too, *for* rather than *in* the Earth) therefore moſt certainly, if at all, or for any thing, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteouſneſs. Jude 6.

But if they put far from them this evil day too, as if they had made a Covenant with Death and with Hell; if they finally refuſe to come under God's Diſcipline, and to take forth to themſelves Leſſons of Righteouſneſs here, they ſhall then be made themſelves great Leſſons, and dreadful examples of God's Righteouſneſs to all the World. If they will not glorifie God in theſe Fires, as they ought, nor walk in the light of them; let them remember that there are Fires without Light, where none glorifie him, but by ſuffering the Eternal Vengeance of their ſins. There muſt they learn by ſaddeſt experience, who obſtinately refuſe the more gainful Method, Ἐν φοβερὸν ἐμπεσεῖν, That *'tis a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God.* For our enemies here muſt die, and our ſtorms at laſt blow over, and our Fires, you ſee, though never

never ſo great, in time go out and vaniſh: But God lives; hath a Worm too, that dies not (for thoſe that live not as they ought) and a fire that is not quenched: The *Babylonian* Furnace, ſeven times hotter than uſual, a cool walk to that; all our *Vulcans* and *Etnas*, our *Heclas* and *Andes* faint types and ſhadows of it; the great Conflagration, we ſo lately trembled at, and ſtill bewail but a ſpark to that infernal *Tophet*, but a Painted Fire to that dreadful *Mongibel*; even *Everlaſting Burnings*. From which, God of his tender Mercy deliver us All; and give us Grace in this our Day, (the Day of his Judgments) ſo to learn Righteouſneſs, and ſo to do it, that at the laſt, and great Day of Judgment, when he ſhall come again to Account with us for all our Learning, and for all our Doings, we may through his Mercy receive the Crown of Righteouſneſs, for his ſake alone, who ſo dearly bought it for us, even Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous: To whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt, be aſcribed by us, and all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth, Bleſſing, Honor, Glory, and Power, henceforth and for evermore. *Amen.*

Μόνῳ Θεῷ δόξα.

FINIS.